

**SAN ANTONIO MISSIONS
NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK**

**SPECIAL EVENTS
SPECIAL USE PERMIT GUIDELINES**

San Antonio Missions National Historical Park administers, protects, preserves and interprets the nation's largest concentration of Spanish colonial resources in the cities of San Antonio and Floresville, Texas. The park is located in a diverse and multi-cultural urban area and has an annual visitation of approximately 1.3 million visitors from all over the country and the world. In an order to protect these rare national treasures for all people to enjoy, the Congress of the United States saw fit to create the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park:

"In order to provide for the preservation, restoration, and interpretation of the Spanish Missions of San Antonio, Texas, for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations of Americans, there is hereby established San Antonio Missions National Historic Park...consisting of Concepcion, San Jose, San Juan, and Espada Missions, together with areas, and features historically associated therewith...."

Opportunities exist for a variety of educational and cultural programs as well as filming and photographic projects utilizing the park's resources. Each Mission has an active parish and church with all the activities associated with it. It is not uncommon for church-related events such as funerals, weddings or religious services to take place during a Special Use Permit activity.

Many requests are received from a variety of individuals or groups seeking to use the park for various reasons. "It is the policy of the National Park Service (NPS) to allow Special Uses that are not in conflict with law or policy; will not result in **derogation of the values and purposes** for which the park was established; do not present a threat to public safety or property and do not unduly interfere with normal park operations, resource protection, or visitor use." Additionally, it is the policy of San Antonio Missions National Historical Park to allow filming and photography when it is consistent with the protection and public enjoyment of park resources. San Antonio Missions National Historical Park and the National Park Service (NPS) have the authority and responsibility to manage, permit and/or deny all special uses within the Park. It is further stated in NPS Special Use Guidelines "it is the policy of the NPS to charge permit fees for Special Uses. Permit fees should reflect the fair market value of a benefit provided the permittee. The fair market value of a Special Use is the value of the lands or facilities used and the NPS cost incurred in managing, facilitating, or supporting the use"²

¹ San Antonio Missions National Historical Park enabling legislation "public law 95-629; Title II; Sec. 201"

² RM-53 "Special Park Uses" Chapter 10 Management of Permit Fees

If the requested park use is not prohibited by NPS guidelines, and is an authorized privilege, rather than a right, the park will analyze the request by asking the following three questions:

1. **Is the use in conflict with any applicable laws and/or policy?** Each special use permit request will be thoroughly reviewed to insure all legal and compliance issues are addressed.
2. **Is the use a derogation of the values and purposes for which the park was established?** A derogation of values and purposes goes beyond merely the physical resources to include a visitor's experience in the park. An appropriate Park Use is defined as "An activity that is consistent with the purpose and values for which the park was established." Additionally "there must be a meaningful association between the park and the event, and the event contributes to the visitor understanding of the significance of the park." Please refer to the Park's Mission Statement: "We provide for the public a greater understanding and appreciation of the Spanish Colonial influence in the New World through interpretation of the historical and architectural values of the San Antonio Missions. We **preserve, restore and protect** in perpetuity the resources of San Antonio Missions National Historical Park."
3. **Will the use present a threat to public safety or property, introduce or have a potential to cause illness, personal injury, or property damage or unduly interfere with normal park operations, resource protection, or visitor use/experience?** Protection of resources including secular and non-secular structures, historic ruins such as low walls, grounds, acequia remnants and other natural and cultural features is secondary to safety but of equal importance in determining the appropriateness of a special use permit being granted.

WHO MAY APPLY FOR A SPECIAL USE PERMIT

Any individual, group, society, organization, may apply for a special use permit. Caterers and other commercial businesses **may not apply** on behalf of individuals, groups, societies or organizations. The applicant for the permit must assume full responsibility and liability for the Special Use.

REQUESTING A SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR A SPECIAL EVENT:

The following guidelines have been established by the Superintendent of San Antonio Missions National Historical Park for managing special event Special Use permits.

- Requests for events should be made in writing to the park's Superintendent no more than six (6) months in advance and at least 14 days prior to the date of the planned event.
- It is recommended that potential applicants check with the park on availability of dates. Although a specific date may be "open", there are times when staff may not be available to manage and monitor a Special Use permit, or other park/church functions are planned for that date, or the date may be a federal holiday in which case, generally, a permit will not be issued.
- It is recommended you refer to appropriate Mission site map when planning your site layout for Special Use Activities. These maps are designed to aid you in determining which areas are open for special use activities and which areas are restricted. As part of the site layout plan you will be responsible for providing the park with a Rain Contingency Plan for your event.
- The park's Superintendent, prior to release, must review press releases, press kits or other forms of media advertising for an activity. Failure to provide information prior to release could have an adverse effect on the Special Use Permit.

In addition to the park's calendar of events, the following criteria have been established for considering special event requests:

1. **Large Events** - The Park will not approve more than one large event every 14 days. A large event is one that requires two days of setup prior to the day of the planned activity (maximum time allowed), one day for the planned activity, and one day to takedown and clears the site. An event is also considered large if the anticipated attendance is 200 or more people.

Small Events - A small event is one that requires setup on the day of the planned activity and has less than 200 people attending. Small events will not be allowed during setup and takedown of large events. In addition, the park will not approve more than two small events per week.

**** Please note that setup activities inside of buildings such as the Granary at Mission San Jose may not begin until after the park closes at 5:00 p.m. All takedown activities must be accomplished immediately after the conclusion of the Special Use to minimize impact on the quality of a visitor's experience to the Missions ****

2. If setup and takedown activities will unduly interfere with the visitor's experience or enjoyment of the park and/or park operations, a special use permit request will be denied.

3. All four of the Mission sites have active parish churches. A variety of church-related activities frequently take place, which could preclude a Special Use from being approved. The permittee is responsible for contacting the individual parish to ensure that their event will not conflict with any planned church activities. Also, at Missions Espada, San Juan and San Jose, the parish priests reside on-site. Consideration will be given as to whether or not the proposed activity will result in disturbing the peace and causing an inconvenience to these site residents. Likewise, Mission Concepcion is located in a residential area with many neighbors in the immediate vicinity. The Superintendent may not approve large evening events that could result in disturbing the peace.
4. The park receives numerous requests to hold wedding ceremonies and wedding receptions on the Missions grounds. These activities are often requested because of the proximity of historic mission churches, buildings and the grounds themselves. Often the unique ambience of these sites proves to be the principal reason for selecting the park as a site for these types of functions. Of and by itself, this is not a reason that would meet the criteria of what constitutes an appropriate park use as defined by National Park Service policies and guidelines. Weddings and other religious ceremonies traditionally held *within* a particular Mission church are generally allowed by the respective churches provided they do not have an adverse impact on the church or park's resources. Request for wedding ceremonies inside one of the Mission churches must be arranged directly with the individual Mission parish. On the other hand, wedding receptions can be held in a number of venues outside the park, and thus would not be an approved use. The exception to this is for registered members of the Mission parishes who have historically and traditionally used the Mission facilities and grounds for their wedding ceremonies and celebrations.
5. DO - 53 Special Use Guidelines **PROHIBITS** the sale in the park of T-shirts and other clothing, whether or not it contains a message. Further, the sale of all other merchandise, including but not limited to arts and crafts, and all other items as noted above are prohibited. This will also include the charging of entrance and/or parking fees for the use of National Park Service administered property.

Solicitation of donation is prohibited on any NPS administered sites in compliance with NPS Director's Order #21³. The above does not affect the sale of merchandise and food by the park's authorized Concessionaire.

However, compatible, non-commercial use (***which does not involve the buying and selling of goods or services or the charge of an admission fee for access***) of the four Mission sites and related resources may be permitted through a special use permit.

Permit events may be restricted based on weather or seasonal conditions (fire danger, standing water after rain, nesting season, etc.). Additional closures, use limits and/or restricted activities are listed in the Superintendent's Compendium.

³ Directors Orders#21-Donations and Fundraising; § 4.5 In-Park Donations; § 4.9 Funds Accountability

Events having the potential to damage or significantly impact or alter park resources are prohibited. **The following are also prohibited:**

1. Altering, damaging or removing vegetation.
2. Vehicle use in the Mission Compounds, around Mission structures, off established roads and parking areas.
3. The attachments of plaques, banners and signs to any wall, window, door, tree, or any other structure within the Mission sites. All signs must be free standing or attached to permittee's property.
4. Stakes, posts and temporary signs driven into the ground.
5. Use of insecticides, herbicides and pesticides.
6. Loud noises that exceed 70dba between the hours of 6am and 11pm and 63 dba between the hours of 11pm and 6am for any activity.
7. Smoking in buildings, on boardwalks or in vegetated areas.
8. Use of fragile vegetation areas, except on trails or already disturbed areas.
9. Flying aircraft below FAA recommended minimum altitude (usually 2,000 feet) or landing of aircraft except at designated landing sites.
10. Writing on or discoloring any natural feature or park structure.
11. Harassment of wildlife is prohibited by law.

If tents are to be used during a Special Use Permit activity, the use of tent stakes to anchor and secure the tent is prohibited. However, tents can be anchored to the ground using 55 gallon drums filled with water. These drums must be clear and empty of any liquids. Drums used to store hazardous materials or chemicals are prohibited from being used as tent anchors. After the activity, the disposal of water used to anchor tents will be at the direction of park staff.

SPECIAL EVENTS PERMIT PROCESS

1. **APPLICATION** - Complete an application form and submit it with your check or money order in the amount of **\$50.00** to cover the **non-refundable** application fee. Your request will be evaluated on the basis of the information in your application. It is recommended that potential applicants check with the park on availability of dates prior to submitting the non-refundable fee. All questions should be answered as accurately and completely as possible. This will assist the park in determining the appropriateness of the planned event and help to estimate NPS costs that may be incurred in managing, facilitating, or supporting the use. Submission of the application form and fee payment **DOES NOT** imply permission for any Special Use or Event. Following receipt of an application for a Special Use permit, an evaluation will be made of the requested activity. Denials will be communicated in writing.
2. **ON-SITE MEETING** - Will be scheduled with the park's permit coordinator and the potential permittee after the application has been received and reviewed. A visit to the potential event site in the park will usually be made at this time. By the end of the meeting, the permit coordinator should have enough information to prepare the permit once the event has been approved. The completed permit will detail the event activities and locations to be authorized. Any activities not specified in the permit will not be allowed. No event on NPS property may begin until the permit has been approved by the park and agreed to by the permittee and signed, by both parties.

Maximum Site Capacities

Each site has its own unique set of concerns and logistical considerations that have been factored into establishing its maximum carrying capacity. These carrying capacities are not arbitrary numbers, but rather are based upon careful staff assessments that reflect the park's concerns for the protection of cultural/natural resources, the visitor's experience and safety.

The maximum carrying capacities for the four Mission sites and their related facilities are as follows:

(These numbers include all attending an event/activity, i.e. caterers, entertainers & guests)

Mission Concepcion	Compound	1000 people
Mission San Jose	Compound	1200 people
	Granary	125 people
Mission San Juan	Compound	1000 people
Mission Espada	Compound	1000 people

Consideration is given to visitor safety and sensitive cultural/natural resources at each of the sites. Some of the areas within the compounds are sites of burials and below grade historic structures. While specific locations for these sensitive resources have not been identified, historic uses of the compounds and limited archeological research indicate their probable locations. These probable locations have created restricted use zones within the mission compounds where no planned activities or set-up may occur. Carrying capacities are also based on the amount of usable space at each site, the number of available vehicle parking spaces, access and lighting to and from parking areas as well as within the event site itself. Also taken into consideration is the park's ability to provide and deliver adequate electrical power, water and restroom facilities.

Restroom Facilities

The restroom facilities at all four-mission sites have limited capacities. The permittee is responsible for providing additional portable units as needed and for complying with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements as follows, "When two or more single user portable toilet units are clustered at a single location, at least 5 percent, but no less than one unit must be accessible. Accessible units must be identified by the International Symbol of Accessibility." The following are the capacities and requirements for each site:

- Missions Concepcion and San Jose restrooms are able to support groups of up to 400. For groups in excess of 400, the permittee will be required, at the permittee's expense, to provide two portable facilities and maintenance of those facilities for each additional 200 visitors.

Group Size	Number of Non-Accessible Units	Number of Accessible Units	Total Number of Units Required
600	1	1	2
800	3	1	4
1000	4	2	6

- Missions San Juan and Espada restrooms are able to support groups of up to 200. For groups in excess of 200, the permittee will be required, at the permittee's expense, to provide two portable facilities and maintenance of those facilities for each additional 200 visitors.

Group Size	Number of Non-Accessible Units	Number of Accessible Units	Total Number of Units Required
200	1	1	2
600	3	1	4
800	5	1	6
1000	6	2	8

Parking and Traffic Management

Each Mission site has a limited number of parking spaces available. Wherever possible, the park strongly encourages the use of buses or other methods of mass transportation to move people to and from mission sites. This should limit street congestion, unsafe traffic patterns and parking situations. For some larger events that exceed the available number of parking spaces and for which it is impractical to arrange for mass transit, the park will work with the permittee to make available some open fields for parking. It will be the responsibility of the permittee to then provide the park with traffic and parking management plan, as well as the necessary personnel to control the traffic and parking operations. Additionally, if the activity is held after sunset, it is the permittee's responsibility to provide necessary safety lighting in the parking fields and other areas that the park designates. Prior to the issuance of any special use permits for activities involving 200 or more participants, a parking and traffic management plan must be submitted as part of any special use request. Contact the Special Use coordinator for additional information before you submit your request.

Stage and/or Sound Systems

Those Special Use events requiring the use of a stage and/or sound system must adhere to the following:

1. No stages for performance/entertainment purposes are permitted if it is visible over the Mission Compound walls or other Missions structures (i.e. granary, churches, convento etc.). The park has set the maximum height for staging and related lighting structures at 20' high. The stage should be of a size and weight as not to require the use of heavy machinery (i.e. forklifts, cranes, etc.) for set up.
2. The Park abides by the City of San Antonio regulations for noise abatement. The regulations set permissible sound levels not to exceed 70 dba between the hours of 6am and 11pm, and 63 dba between the hours of 11pm and 6am for any activity.

Electrical and Lighting

In instances where electrical power and lighting requirements exceed the park's ability to provide service, the permittee will be responsible for providing their own power source and lighting. Additionally, if an event is held after sunset, it is the permittee's responsibility to provide a lighting plan that identifies necessary safety lighting in parking fields, along walkways, and in other areas that the park designates. A complete power and lighting plan must be submitted for the review and approval of the Superintendent, the Division of Professional Services, and the park's Facility Manager prior to any electrical work-taking place. A state certified and licensed electrician must do all electrical work as outlined in the electrical and lighting plan. It is the responsibility of the permittee to arrange for an Electrical Code Inspection by the Chief Electrical Inspector for the City of San Antonio. The permittee must provide the park with proof of a satisfactory inspection before the start of a permitted special use.

Grounds Maintenance

Please note that any ground maintenance or mowing activities outside the park's normal mowing cycle will be charged to the permittee. Should the application of pesticides be necessary for pest control (i.e. fire ants), the park's Integrated Pest Management Coordinator will coordinate the pesticide application process. The permittee will be responsible for all associated costs of pest control for the event.

Trash Removal

It will be the responsibility of the permittee to arrange for the removal of all trash generated as a result of their special event. Depending on the size and scope of the special event, the permittee may be required to arrange, (at the permittee's expense) for the delivery and pick-up of a 10 yd. or larger dumpster for trash removal. The dumpster must be delivered before the start of the scheduled event and picked up immediately after its' conclusion. The placement of the dumpster drop off must be coordinated with the park's Special Use permit coordinator or his/her designee.

Safety Inspection

At the discretion of the park's Safety Advisor and upon completion of set-up, the event area will be subject to a **Safety Inspection**. If your event includes the sale of food items to the public the permittee will be responsible for arranging for **Public Health Inspections**⁴ of all food service stands and operations. Any failure to correct hazardous conditions pointed out by the Safety Advisor or to provide necessary certificates may be grounds to suspend activities or to revoke the Special Use Permit.

If your planned activity calls for the use of animals or livestock, you must notify the park no less than seven (7) days in advance of the scheduled event. The park will make the final decision on the number and types of animals that will be permitted and the number of wranglers and/or veterinarians required to control the animals to ensure safety of all visitors, participants, staff and animals. When not working, animals must be restricted or confined and under supervision at all times. The permittee will also be responsible for the removal of all animal waste from the park site throughout the activity and at its conclusion.

Permit Fees

Site Fees* - for use of grounds and buildings:

*All fees are subject to change.

Number of People	Cost per 100 people
up to 500	\$ 50
501 to 1000	\$100

Utilities* - for use of water, electricity and sewage:

*All fees are subject to change.

Number of People	Cost per 100 people
up to 500	\$ 50
501 to 1000	\$100

Park Staff* - Staffing levels are generally determined as follows:

*Park Staff is for monitoring purposes only.

Number of People	Setup	Event	Takedown
up to 25	1	2	1
26 to 100	1	2	1
101 to 200	2	3	2
201 to 300	2	4	2
301 to 500	2	4	2
501 to 800	3	5	2
801 to 1000	4	6	4

⁴ Director's Order#83 Public Health - §C. -Food Service Sanitation – paragraph C.3 Temporary Food Service Operations

Monitoring Fee of \$30.00 per hour per ranger that is required to monitor the event activities and ensure park resource protection.

Additional security may be required at the Superintendent's discretion. Should this occur, the permittee must arrange to have **TEXAS STATE-CERTIFIED PEACE OFFICERS** provide the additional security services.

Special interpretive programs such as tours or orientation talks provided by park rangers in conjunction with a Special Use Permit are available upon request. There is a \$30.00 per hour charge for each Park Ranger providing these services during the actual event.

Administrative Fee of 20% will be charged to the permittee. This charge reflects costs associated with the administrative process for the permit⁵. Once the permit has been approved.

If any additional costs are incurred, the permittee will be billed at the conclusion of the project.

Insurance Requirements, Security Bond and Performance Bond

Insurance - Liability insurance protects the government from negligent actions by permittee. General liability insurance must be carried by the permittee showing the **U. S. Government as additionally insured**. Short-term policies must show coverage on “occurrence” basis. The minimum amount of liability insurance is \$1,000,000.00. Additional amounts may be required for high-risk activities. The park sets the insurance amount based on local conditions and has the right to waive insurance for low-risk activities such as a commemorative ceremony.

If alcoholic beverages are to be served during the course of a Special Use Permit activity, additional insurance in the form of Liquor Liability or Host Liability insurance will be required in amounts set by the park.

Security Bond is essentially a **refundable** damage deposit in an amount adequate to cover estimated cost of restoration, repair and rehabilitation of an area that may have been damaged as a result of the event activities.

Performance Bond is the total estimated cost reimbursable to the park for expenses incurred as a result of the event activities. This performance bond **must** be received before the Special Use Permit can be issued.

A permittee may elect to deposit United States Treasury Bonds or Notes, a certified or cashier’s check, bank draft, money order or cash equal to the amount of the required bond. **A personal check is not acceptable in lieu of a bond.**⁶

USE OF THE BOND

Those bond amounts, paid in advance, are deposited into a designated park account upon receipt. Should the permittee fail to perform any part of the necessary restoration, or fail to reimburse San Antonio Missions National Historical Park for costs associated with the permit, the account will be used to make any payments necessary. Any remaining balance will be returned to the permittee. If the bond is insufficient to cover costs, the permittee will be issued a bill for collection for the amount of the deficit. Funds from bonds, including letters of credit, shall be withdrawn only in the amount owed to the NPS. *A bond will never be used as a penalty.*

- a. A bond may also be used to recover NPS costs (administrative, monitoring and/or management) only if the Superintendent specifies it as a condition of the permit.
- b. The bonding instrument must provide the Superintendent with immediate access to the funds when needed.

⁶ RM- 53 “Special Park Uses” Chapter 9 Permit Provisions

**Any request for additional information
should be directed to:**

San Antonio Missions
National Historical Park
2202 Roosevelt Avenue
San Antonio, Texas 78210
Attn: Special Use Coordinator

Phone: (210) 534-8833
Fax: (210) 534 -1106

